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Preparing junior administrators to step into the role of school principal is a challenge many urban school districts face. Typically a large school district will leverage an existing pool of experienced assistant principals and vice principals to fill principal positions. At a minimum this ensures the candidates are familiar with internal structures, district culture, policies and procedures, and the community which the school district serves. However, unless addressed in a strategic manner, the assistant and vice principal role lacks many of the critical components which are required of the principal position. While the majority of these individuals will have completed a university-based principal preparation program, obtained state certification to serve in the role of principal, and often times have served as an assistant or vice principal for a number of years, there is still often a wide gap between their current job duties and what will be expected of them as principals. Thus, there is a need for additional training to prepare these individuals to successfully transition into the role of urban school principals. To this end, this article examines a principal transition program which was created as a collaboration between a regional education service center, school districts, and university partners to prepare assistant and vice principals for the principal position.

Background on Bexar PREP

The Education Service Center, Region 20 (ESC-20) is a non-regulatory organization that supports both public and charter schools in south central Texas. The mission of ESC-20 is to improve student achievement by developing high quality services that enable schools to operate more efficiently and effectively. In 2011, while speaking with several superintendents in the area, one of the major themes that emerged was the need for principal development to address the leadership pipeline needs in their school districts. Through a collaborative conversation with school district leadership it was agreed that ESC-20 would develop a program to serve the education community, focusing on five urban districts that expressed a strong interest in such a program.

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The ESC-20 leadership team organized an advisory committee to discuss the need for a principal preparation program in the region. The advisory group consisted of superintendents, deputy superintendents, principals, former principals, university faculty, and ESC-20 staff. The role of the advisory committee was to provide guidance and expertise, serve as resources to identify best practices in principal development, identify district needs, and to provide feedback and input related to the development of the principal preparation program. From this meeting it became clear there was a need to design a model program that would contribute to the preparation of assistant and vice principals for the principal position. The Bexar County Principal Readiness Education Program (Bexar PREP) was launched in the summer of 2013. The vision for the program was established – "A collaborative approach to addressing the need for highly effective leaders in urban schools in Bexar County." Additionally, a set of priorities were identified as follows:

- Read/Connect/Build relationships with the education community
- Instructional Leadership/Instructional Focus
- Capacity Building/Shared Leadership
- Systems – Implementing/Aligning
- Aligning Vision and Practice

Each cohort consists of approximately 50 rising leaders from five large urban districts in south central Texas. Participants interact with university faculty, superintendents, principals, and students from across the region to gain a deeper understanding of what it takes to become an effective urban school principal and increase their own levels of principal self-efficacy.

The Bexar PREP Professional Development was provided over an eight month period of time. The cohort members participated in a total of 45.5 hours. This included five 7 hour days, one 3.5 hour day, and one 7 hour "Shadow an Urban Principal" day. The professional development was designed by the Associate Director at ESC-20 and an Associate Superintendent in charge of professional development. Together, these individuals have over 40 years of experience in training and facilitating adult learning at the school district, regional, and state levels. To help place this endeavor in the broader context of what is known regarding principal career transition, the conversation now turns to a review of the existing literature.

Literature Review

The Principal Pipeline

The role of school administrators, including both principal and assistant principal, has evolved over the years to conform to the demands for reforms in curriculum, governance, organizational structures, assessment, and accountability, with the goal of improving school quality for diverse students (Petrides, Jimes & Karaglani, 2014). Effective school administrators assume multiple functions including serving as mentors, supervisors, instructional leaders, managers, politicians, and advocates (The Wallace Foundation, 2013; Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2015; Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). Junior administrators such as assistant principals (APs), vice principals (VPs), or deputy head teachers are an important part of the administrative team. However, until recently these positions have typically been underutilized and are often described as the dumping ground for undesirable tasks delegated by the principal such as bus duty, lunch duty, supervising sporting events, and meting out discipline (Petrides et al., 2014).

It should be noted that assistant principals' experiences can vary markedly from one school to another depending on the responsibilities the principal is willing to delegate to them (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012). Although junior administrators often lack a precise job description, they perform a number of tasks that are critical to school success (Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). New principals are often forced to learn on the job because most of their previous experiences as APs have been found not to be fully compatible with the complex functions of the principalship (Weller & Weller, 2002). To meet the evolving demands placed on school leaders, there is an urgent need to refine the assistant principal to principal pipeline.

Bridging the AP-Principal Skill Gap

If school districts are to maintain a pool of effective school leaders, it makes sense to develop a pipeline of leaders by developing junior administrators. Some school districts have responded to this need by designing "grow your own" programs which are geared toward preparing APs for principal positions within the district (Gurley et al., 2015). The most effective of these programs provide APs with opportunities for mentorship, training (professional development), and support systems to facilitate acquisition of skills in visionary leadership, teacher coaching, master scheduling, program development and evaluation, and district operations, policies, and procedures (Petrides et al., 2014; Daresh, 2001). Coaching coupled with meaningful feedback are useful mechanisms to help new principals acquire desired leadership skills (Goff, Guthrie, Goldring, & Bickman, 2014). As a form of structured mentorship, Eckman and Kelber (2010) recommend implementing co-principalship models where leadership is distributed in order for duties to be shared and learned. Whatever the mentoring model, its success largely depends on the willingness of the sitting principals to invest in their assistants. Not surprisingly, when assistant principals perceive they have been mentored by their principals, they report feeling better prepared for the principalship (Gurley et al., 2015; Retelle, 2010).

There are many areas which have been identified as professional development needs for APs who aspire to principal positions. These include instructional leadership, community relations, discipline management, staff and program evaluation, familiarity with legal issues, emergency management, school facilities and fiscal management (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012; Oliver, 2005). Unfortunately, most district-based professional development trainings are targeted at teachers or principals, leaving APs notably underserved (Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010). Given that APs do not have their own professional associations; principal professional development programs have become the main source of professional growth for APs (Petrides et al., 2014). For instance, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) contributes significantly in providing APs professional development programming and resources that connect to instructional leadership - a critical role of the principal (National Association Secondary School Principals, 2015).

School leadership preparation programs often focus more upon the principalship than the role of assistant principal. This is somewhat anachronistic as much as most of the graduates of these programs begin their administrative careers as APs (Busch, MacNeil, & Baraniuk, 2010). Additionally, many university leadership programs emphasize theory over practice, leaving on the job training as the default source of learning opportunity for most assistant principals (Oleszewski et al., 2012). It should be noted that some preparation programs have begun to tackle this challenge, utilizing strategies such as course-embedded internships designed for their

APs to gain real job experience that is aligned with course content and theory (Eller, 2010; Barnett, Copland, & Shoho, 2009).

As the mandates of the accountability system increase and more expectations are placed on schools and school districts, the contribution of the AP is imperative. To utilize the APs more effectively and to simultaneously train them as future principals, their job duties should include tasks that utilize APs as instructional leaders who positively impact student academic performance (Petrides et al., 2014; Oleszewski et al., 2012). However, as presented earlier, other skill sets (e.g., discipline management, staff and program evaluation, emergency management, fiscal management, and extracurricular supervision) pertinent to the positon of principal need attention as well.

Principal Self-Efficacy

The job of the principal has evolved to become extensive, complex, and increasingly accountable to myriad stakeholders including parents, community, district, state, and federal agencies (Abaya & Normore, 2014). According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to "people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (p. 2). Self-efficacy derives from four sources: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1978). Bandura (1997) found that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are able to carry out administrative tasks with persistence and motivation. A school leader's self-efficacy can explain principal effort, goal attainment, and how s/he deals with adversity (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011).

School administrators with high levels of self-efficacy display quality supervision of teachers, persistence in pursuing goals and accomplishing tasks, and are more open and willing to adapt to change (Flessa, 2012). Therefore, these leaders are better positioned to influence the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining a positive school climate for both staff and students (Price, 2012; Smith, Guarino, Strom, & Adams, 2006). Principals with high levels of self-efficacy are often highly engaged with the school community, are satisfied with their jobs, and exhibit low burn out, all of which are critical attributes for the demanding job of the principal (Federici, 2012; Federici & Skaalvik, 2011;Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

By contrast, principals with low levels of self-efficacy tend to utilize their position forcefully to elicit desired actions from the faculty and staff (Fisher, 2011). These administrators struggle to identify appropriate strategies to create change and are often unwilling to explore new strategies if their current one is unsuccessful (Fisher, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Leaders with low self-efficacy are inclined to blame others for their failures as they are unable to see opportunities for growth, experience high burnout, are exhausted due to constant failures, have negative attitudes, do not engage in interpersonal or intrapersonal relationships, and are unable to show empathy to the school community (Friedman 2002; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). School district officials are in need of principals who believe they can meet challenges (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011).

Principal as School Manager

Principals are often expected to conduct business as educational leaders as well as managers (Flessa, 2012). However, with the introduction of accountability for student achievement, the

principal's role has shifted in emphasis from management to instructional leadership, focusing on teaching and instruction (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). The literature indicates that principals often delegate the day-to-day management function of the school to the assistant principal (Petrides et al., 2014; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Great principals are generally effective both as managers and as instructional leaders (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). As the school manager, the principal is charged with utilizing material and human resources within the school in an effective and efficient manner (Flessa, 2012). In an era of limited resources, principals are forced to be shrewd in the way they appropriate school resources. The managerial role of the principal job draws from business knowledge of running organizations or institutions (Flessa, 2012; Machin, 2014). Part of effective management of personnel requires principals to positively interact with teachers to improve the school climate and shape the school culture, set high expectations for teachers and students and provide the necessary support, be a talented and knowledgeable educational leader, model desired behaviors, and offer professional development opportunities to teachers while simultaneously adhering to district, state, and federal policies and procedures (Price, 2012). Principals who choose to approach their school leadership position from a strictly managerial perspective are not as likely to be successful in current public school settings as they would have been in previous generations (Flessa, 2012). Principals have to understand that their role of school manager is now coupled with an expectation of the principal as the campus' instructional leader. These two roles should be complimentary (Black, 2005).

Principal as Instructional Leader

Instructional leadership has evolved to epitomize the expectation of the principalship, which requires a leader with a strong purpose and commitment to student learning. Research suggests that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction (i.e., teachers) in terms of school related factors that influence student learning and outcomes (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012; Petrides et al., 2014; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). As instructional leaders, principals have to set high expectations for teachers and students alike, support and supervise teachers, and emphasize effective instruction and rigorous curriculum to ensure all students succeed academically (Gurley, Anast-May, O'Neal, Lee & Shores, 2015; Busch et al., 2010; Kwan, 2009). Principals can utilize "research-based strategies to improve teaching and learning and initiate discussions about instructional approaches, both in teams and with individual teachers. They [can] pursue these strategies despite the preference of many teachers to be left alone" (The Wallace Foundation, 2012, p. 11). Moreover, Gurley et al. (2015) suggest that principals need to take the initiative to visit classrooms more often to observe and evaluate classroom instruction. Spiro (2013) believes that effective schools have established classroom visits (observations) which are frequent, short, spontaneous, and quickly followed up with feedback. When all these leadership efforts culminate in a change in instructional practices then student learning and achievement is significantly impacted (Petrides et al., 2014; Leithwood et al., 2008).

Many successful schools share a common thread of instructional leaders who place laser-like focus on quality instruction coupled with knowledge about the curriculum, motivating teachers, using data to drive curriculum choices, and developing programs centered on student educational needs (Cross & Rice, 2000; Flessa, 2012; Mendels, 2012; Petrides et al., 2014). These leaders are able to effectively communicate and rally personnel commitment to the vision of the school. Instructional leaders with prior classroom experience are more likely to understand teachers' challenges and most importantly they can provide input on effective teaching strategies (Mestry,

2013). Findings from a questionnaire and personal interviews with eight principals established that principals who focused on instruction matters had much success in leading schools and attaining high student achievement (Mestry, 2013).

Becoming an instructional leader is a challenging task. As other administrative duties take precedence, many principals find themselves with limited time to fully engage with the instructional agenda of the campus. Other principals do not quite comprehend the centrality of the instructional leader (Leo, 2015). Despite these challenges, the benefits demonstrate how important it is for principals to take on this role. Effective instructional leaders can coalesce stakeholders around the instructional agenda thus developing social capital that supports the school (Abaya & Normore, 2014). Also, instructional leaders develop academic capital by prioritizing teaching and learning when establishing school policies and procedures. Finally, instructional leaders create intellectual and professional capital by working with teachers and students to improve learning outcomes (Gurley, Anast-May, O'Neal, Lee, & Shores, 2015; Hallinger & Murphy, 2012).

Principal as Moral Leader

The principal plays a significant role in shaping the future outcomes of students. In executing their daily duties, school leaders are forced to sometimes make decisions based on value judgment or moral convictions (Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, & Spina, 2014; Pardini, 2004). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2010) provide a framework consisting of the ethic of justice, critique, care, and the profession. The principal as a moral leader must create a culture within the school that communicates values in a way that is authentic. Additionally, principals must be mindful of the implications their decisions will have on students, families, and the community. A clear definition of moral and ethical leadership in the field of educational administration remains quite elusive, in part, due to the controversial nature of the concept itself, however values of inclusion, collaboration, and social justice are intertwined in the frameworks established on ethical and moral leadership (Ehrich et al., 2014). The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) provides moral competency guidelines for leadership administrative programs which emphasize the expectation that educational leaders act with integrity, fairness, and ethics (Pijanowski, 2007). Additionally there are a variety of context-based definitions of moral leadership which include establishing a clear vision for campus success, demonstrating respect for all persons, having high expectations, empowering and supporting educators, and providing a sense of belonging for all stakeholders (Abaya & Normore, 2014).

Unfortunately, there are many examples of moral and ethical improprieties among the top ranks of educational leaders, such as nepotism, embezzlement, and sexual scandals. As a result, the American Association of School Administrators (2014) outlined specific codes of ethics for school administration to follow. Many leadership training programs now emphasize ethical standards and embed moral leadership topics within their training programs (Ehrich et al., 2014; Holster, 2004). Encouragingly, the increased attention to moral and ethical topics in educational leadership programs is supported by research that has established moral leadership as an important characteristic of high performing schools, particularly those situated in high poverty environments (Price, 2012; Fullan, 2003).

Methodology

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of two groups: assistant principals participating in Bexar PREP, and assistant principals not participating in Bexar PREP. The Bexar PREP participants were nominated for participation in this professional development by their school principal and/or central office administration within participating school districts in south Texas. These individuals serve as the experimental group in this study. The control group was also made up of assistant principals within the same region of south Texas. These individuals completed the pre and post-test surveys but did not participate in Bexar PREP. Surveys were distributed to a total of 100 junior level administrators. Of these, 76 individuals completed both the pre- and post-surveys. 41 of these individuals participated in Bexar PREP and 35 individuals did not participate in Bexar PREP. At the inception of the study, all 76 of these individuals were serving as junior level school administrators, which is to say they were not yet school principals.

Data Collection

Data were disseminated at the beginning and end of the 2014-2015 school year. Surveys were collected from Bexar PREP participants at the beginning of the first regularly scheduled professional development meeting and once again at the end of the last regularly scheduled professional development meeting. A trained researcher administered the pencil and paper survey. Surveys were distributed and collected from non-Bexar PREP participants electronically. These surveys were distributed and collected in the same time-frame as for those in the experimental group, with the first survey being sent out in September, 2014, and the second survey being distributed in May, 2015. The same assessment was used for both the pre-test and the post-test for both groups.

Instrumentation

The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale was selected for use in this study due to its proven reliability and factor structure (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale is a three factor instrument which measures the following three factors: principal self-efficacy in regard to management; principal self-efficacy regarding instructional leadership; and principal self-efficacy for moral leadership. This is a nine point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1=none at all to 9 = a great deal. There are 6 survey items for each factor for a total of 18 items.

Principal Efficacy - Management: The degree to which administrators believe in their capability to make a difference in the management of the schools they lead.

Sample items from factor 1 include:

- To what extent can you handle the time demands of the job?
- To what extent can you handle the paperwork demands of the job? and
- To what extent can you shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?

Principal Efficacy – Instructional leadership: The degree to which administrators believe in their capability to make a difference in the instruction of the schools they lead.

Sample items from factor 2 include:

- To what extent can you create a positive learning environment in your school?
- To what extent can you motivate teachers? and

- To what extent can you facilitate student learning in your school?

Principal Efficacy – Moral leadership: The degree to which administrators believe in their capability to provide moral leadership to the schools they lead.

Sample items from factor 3 include:

- To what extent can you promote acceptable behavior among students?
- To what extent can you promote the prevailing values of your community in your school? and
- To what extent can you promote ethical behavior among school personnel?

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the impact of participation in Bexar PREP on aspiring principal management self-efficacy?
RQ2: What is the impact of participation in Bexar PREP on aspiring principal instructional leadership self-efficacy?
RQ3: What is the impact of participation in Bexar PREP on aspiring principal moral leadership self-efficacy?

Procedures

To test the research questions, the following procedures were followed: A pre-test/post-test design was selected to measure the difference between a control and an experimental group of aspiring principals. The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale created by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) was selected as the evaluation instrument because of its focus on self-perception of school leaders, and because the three factors within this scale have a direct conceptual link with the instructional focus of Bexar PREP which were designed to prepare school leaders for a successful transition into the role of school principal.

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained to ensure adequate protections of human subjects were in place. Confidentiality of respondents was assured and all tests were de-identified and coded so as to ensure anonymity. In the Fall semester of 2014, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale was administered as a pre-test to a group of individuals currently serving as assistant principals, vice principals, or academic deans. Nine months later, in the Spring semester of 2015, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale was administered as a post-test to the same group of school administrators. This group received no targeted intervention.

Simultaneously, in the Fall semester of 2014, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale was administered as a pre-test to a group of assistant principals, vice principals, and academic deans who were enrolled in the Bexar County Principal Readiness Education Program (Bexar PREP). Bexar PREP participants received six days of professional development. Each session was designed to provide participants an opportunity to hear multiple perspectives on topics that were identified as priorities through the advisory committee. These included the perspectives of peers, students, teachers, principals, district leaders, superintendents, and faculty from institutes of higher education. Below is an overview of the topics that were covered during Bexar PREP:

- Day 1: Leadership Framework and Overview: The morning session includes an overview of Bexar PREP, review of a leadership case study, Education Philosophy, Leadership Models/Styles, Overview of Books/Resources, Leadership Framework,

Vision/Mission/Beliefs, and change. Additionally, participants meet the other cohort members and begin to build their new professional learning community.

- Day 2: Creating Cultural Responsiveness: Cultural responsiveness is a critical concept for leaders and is essential in urban schools. This session includes multiple perspectives in defining this concept including the use of case studies. The afternoon session begins with a student panel consisting of high school age students from across the San Antonio area. The afternoon session concludes with more learning and reflection related to the application of cultural responsiveness at the campus level.
- Day 3: Addressing the Unique Needs of Urban Students- Effective Practices: This session focuses on effective practices in urban schools. In the morning PREP participant have an opportunity to visit an urban high school or middle school in the San Antonio area. The campus visit includes a welcome and overview by the campus principal and leadership team, a campus tour, classroom visits, and opportunities to talk with teachers and students. The afternoon session includes a debrief of the morning visits with a focus on lessons learned and best practices that were observed.
- Day 4: Perspectives on Urban Leadership and Alignment and Data: The morning includes panel discussions with San Antonio area practitioners. These discussions include area superintendents, campus principals, and College of Education faculty from San Antonio area Universities. Discussions focus on the unique attributes of effective urban leaders. The afternoon session focuses on the use of data with an emphasis on the unique role of nominal data, teaching data, and learning data. The afternoon session also includes an overview of the effective use of action research.
- Day 5: Transforming School Culture: The morning is spent conducting campus level Alignment Walks to analyze alignment of instructional practices, district scope and sequence, and alignment among and between PREP participants. This session includes an overview of the Alignment Walk process along with actual classroom walkthroughs and focused debriefs. The focus on the afternoon session is school culture. We visit a local urban high school and experience the school culture first hand. The visit includes a school tour and a visit with a number of students who have experienced the shift in culture first hand. We explore the concept of school culture in theory and explore successful practices related to the intentional development of school culture.
- Day 6: Forwarding the Action and Celebration: This session provides a venue for the application of many of the concepts and learning that took place over the course of the year. The participants engage in Shadow Principal debrief and discussion. Additionally, they spend time discussing various Leadership Frameworks, professional portfolios, and the interview process. The participant's superintendents, principals and other district leaders are encouraged to attend the morning reception and celebration.

Additionally, each PREP participant was provided an opportunity to spend a full day with an effective urban leader. During this "Shadow on Urban Principal" day a series of questions and concepts were discussed which included topics related to instructional systems, instructional leadership, academic success for all, and school culture. These responses were later analyzed and trend data were explored in the pursuit of the identification of best practices in urban school leadership.

The identification of effective urban leaders was accomplished through dialogue and consultation with the senior level leaders in the participating organizations. This included a review of the priority concepts for Bexar PREP. Additionally, there was discussion around the unique skillset that is required to lead schools in urban areas. Each leader would need to be able to engage in conversation with their assigned cohort member around their specific leadership approaches that ultimately contributed to their success as an urban leader. The following questions were shared to better inform decisions related to the identification of these effective urban leaders. These are the same questions that the Bexar PREP participants would ask of the urban leaders on the shadow visit days.

- What instructional systems do you have in place? How? When? Where? Please share examples and any relevant artifacts or resources.
- With the many responsibilities involved with the principalship, how do you ensure that instructional leadership is a priority?
- When you became a principal of this school, what were some of the first steps you took to improve academic success for all students?
- When you became a principal of this school, how did you assess the school culture and what did you do to strengthen the school culture around teaching and learning?

Upon completion of the Bexar PREP program, in the Spring semester of 2015, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale was administered as a post-test to this same group of school administrators.

Results

A total of one hundred surveys were distributed. Ten individuals elected not to participate in the study. Twelve individuals completed only the pre-test and two respondents completed only the post-test, however due to the pre-test/post-test nature of this study, these respondents were excluded from analysis. That left a total of seventy-six individuals who completed both the pre- and post- assessments of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale. Forty-one of these individuals participated in Bexar PREP (experimental group) and thirty-five individuals did not participate in Bexar PREP (control group). Table 1 presents descriptive information regarding the survey responses for both the control and experimental groups.

Data from the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale were then analyzed using ANalysis of CO-VAriance (ANCOVA) techniques. ANCOVA analysis is uniquely well suited to analyze the variance between experimental and control groups (Cohen, 2013). The results of these analyses revealed statistically significant differences between control and experimental groups for each of the three factors of principal self-efficacy (See Tables 2-4). The three factors were principal efficacy in regard to management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. The results of each of the three ANCOVAs are presented in turn.

In regard to respondents' beliefs in their management self-efficacy, the management factor of the post-test served as the dependent variable, the management factor of the pre-test served as the covariate, and the fixed factor was group (control versus experimental). The results of this analysis revealed a significant difference between the control and experimental groups *($F(1,74) = 7.178$; $p < .01$)*, indicating that those participants who received the intervention experienced a

statistically significant gain in their post-test management self-efficacy score as compared to students in the control group who did not receive the intervention. The partial Eta squared = .090, which means that participation in Bexar PREP accounted for 9% of the change in management self-efficacy beliefs (See Table 2).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Group	Number of Respon-dents	Sub-Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mini mum	Maxim um
Control Group	35	Management Pre-test	6.38	1.43	2.67	8.5
Control Group	35	Management Post-test	6.54	1.36	2.83	8.67
Control Group	35	Instructional Leadership Pre-test	6.71	1.02	4.67	8.83
Control Group	35	Instructional Leadership Post-test	6.48	0.98	3.83	8.17
Control Group	35	Moral Leadership Pre-test	6.78	1.10	4.50	8.83
Control Group	35	Moral Leadership Post-test	6.81	1.62	3.00	8.71
Experimental Group	41	Management Pre-test	7.05	1.08	4.67	8.83
Experimental Group	41	Management Post-test	7.59	1.15	2.83	9.00
Experimental Group	41	Instructional Leadership Pre-test	7.03	0.92	4.83	8.83
Experimental Group	41	Instructional Leadership Post-test	7.45	0.91	4.50	8.83
Experimental Group	41	Moral Leadership Pre-test	6.90	1.11	4.00	8.67
Experimental Group	41	Moral Leadership Post-test	7.56	1.04	3.83	9.00

Table 2
ANCOVA Results for Principal Self-Efficacy: Management

Subhead	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance	Partial Eta Squared
Management pre-test	37.072	1	34.501	.000	.321
Group	7.713	1	7.178	.009	.090
Error	78.440	73			
Total	3972.875	76			
Corrected Total	136.033	75			

Note: Dependent variable: Management post-test; Covariate: Management pre-test; Fixed Factor: Group (Control versus Experimental)

To test whether there was a significant difference in respondents' instructional leadership self-efficacy beliefs, a second ANCOVA model was run. For this analysis, the instructional leadership factor of the post-test served as the dependent variable, the instructional leadership factor of the pre-test served as the covariate, and the fixed factor was group. The results of this analysis revealed a significant difference between the control and experimental groups *(F (1,74)*

= 22.211; p < .01), indicating that those students who received the intervention experienced a statistically significant gain in their post-test instructional leadership self-efficacy score as compared to students in the control group who did not receive the intervention. The partial Eta squared for this ANCOVA was .233, meaning participation in Bexar PREP accounted for 23% of the change in instructional leadership self-efficacy beliefs (See Table 3).

Table 3
ANCOVA Results for Principal Self-Efficacy: Instructional Leadership

Subhead	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance	Partial Eta Squared
Instructional Leadership pre-test	30.410	1	62.949	.000	.463
Group	10.730	1	22.211	.000	.233
Error	35.266	73			
Total	3811.201	76			
Corrected Total	83.701	75			

Note: Dependent variable: Instructional Leadership post-test; Covariate: Instructional Leadership pre-test; Fixed Factor: Group (Control versus Experimental)

Finally, to examine whether there was a significant difference in moral leadership self-efficacy between Bexar PREP and non-Bexar PREP participants, an ANCOVA model was run in which the dependent variable was moral leadership factor of the post-test, the covariate was the moral leadership pre-test, and the fixed factor was group. Once again, the results of this analysis revealed a significant difference between the control and experimental groups *(F (1,74) = 5.654; p < .05)*, indicating that those students who received the intervention experienced a statistically significant gain in their post-test moral leadership self-efficacy score as compared to students in the control group who did not receive the intervention. The partial Eta squared = .072, meaning participation in Bexar PREP accounted for 7% of the change in moral leadership self-efficacy beliefs (See Table 4).

Table 4
ANCOVA Results for Principal Self-Efficacy: Moral Leadership

Subhead	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance	Partial Eta Squared
Moral Leadership pre-test	15.200	1	9.462	.003	.115
Group	9.082	1	5.654	.020	.072
Error	117.266	73			
Total	4099.056	76			
Corrected Total	142.879	75			

Note: Dependent variable: Moral Leadership post-test; Covariate: Moral Leadership pre-test; Fixed Factor: Group (Control versus Experimental)

Discussion

It is perhaps not surprising that after participating in a program designed to improve principal readiness, participants' level of principal self-efficacy beliefs rose. This result is consistent with Bandura's (1978) assertion that vicarious experience and verbal persuasion can improve self-efficacy. What is particularly interesting is the effect size for each ANCOVA. Participation in Bexar PREP accounted for 9% of the management post-test score. While not insignificant, this is a relatively small growth trajectory as compared with instructional leadership. One explanation for why this may be the case is that assistant principals often have managerial tasks assigned to them in their roles as junior administrators (Petrides et al., 2014). The stereotype that entry level school administrators are responsible for textbooks, transportation, and student discipline, is an apt reminder of some of the managerial components commonly associated with the role of assistant principal. To be sure, the management responsibilities are broader at the principal level, but this is one area in which the typical duties of an assistant principal may give these individuals confidence that they know how to be building managers.

Instructional leadership appears to be quite a different story. For the participants in this study, this was the largest growth trajectory, with participation in Bexar PREP accounting for 23% of the growth in instructional leadership self-efficacy scores. This growth reflects positively on the instructional leadership development provided within the Bexar PREP program, since Curriculum and Instruction Systems are emphasized throughout Bexar PREP. The response from participants to these modules is very favorable and it is evident from existing literature, participants, and partnering school districts that this is an area of great interest and need (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). The statistical results for this factor found within this study may also be a reflection of the typical job duties of assistant principals. If assistant principals are generally viewed as building managers rather than instructional leaders, then the gap between their current job duties and the role they will be expected to fill as principal may be widest in this area. The implications of this gap are important. First, it validates the need for programs such as Bexar PREP to help bridge this gap in preparing principals to serve as campus instructional leaders. Second, it points to a systemic question of how current school principals and district level administrators are preparing (or failing to prepare) junior level administrators as future principals. While utilizing one's assistants to carry out managerial tasks may be an expeditious division of labor in the short term, it is a less than favorable model for building leadership capacity (Eckman & Kelber, 2010).

Analyzing the moral leadership results presents an interesting question. Of the three components of principal self-efficacy measured in this study, this produced the smallest effect size. In fact, participation in Bexar PREP accounted for only 7% of the moral leadership post-test scores. Once again, this is not insignificant, and it should be noted that some growth is better than no growth. But why is growth smallest in this area? Perhaps it is because changing individuals' moral sensibilities is a long-term process. Perhaps it is because university preparation programs are doing a good job at instilling high levels of moral leadership sensibilities in their graduates. Alternately, it is possible that moral leadership sensibilities are more a reflection of societal norms or individual beliefs. Or perhaps these results demonstrate that for the participants in this study, moral leadership is deeply ingrained by the time individuals reach this point in their career.

Implications

The results of this study have implications for faculty within principal preparation programs, for school and district leaders, and for current assistant principals. To begin with, university faculty may be well served to consider the preparation they are providing to their program participants during their course of study. Questions for consideration might include: to what extent are management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership taught within the program? Is the program well balanced in these areas, or is there a need for enhancement in any of these areas? Separately, there is an interesting question about what role universities can play in helping their program graduates beyond graduation. What is your program doing to support your leadership graduates beyond graduation? If, as this study and others suggest (e.g., Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Weller & Weller, 2002), there is a need for helping individuals transition into the role of principal, can universities assist in this process? This assistance could be targeted specifically at program graduates, or it could be offered to school district administrators regardless of whether or not these individuals graduated from a specific program. Universities may wish to consider the potential utility of partnering with multiple education agencies such as school districts and regional education service centers to provide principal readiness training.

The results of this study also have potential implications for school and district leaders. As noted in the discussion section above, assistant principals may be receiving better on the job training as building managers than as instructional leaders. If this is in fact the case, that raises some serious concerns about leadership pipelines for school districts. This may be particularly true for urban schools that rely heavily on a grow your own model of leadership promotion. It may be difficult for new principals to take on the mantle of campus instructional leader if this was not part of their previous experiences.

Finally, there are implications for current junior level school administrators who aspire to the role of principal. Given the realities noted above, it may be beneficial for aspiring principals to know how to advocate for one's own professional development needs. This may mean taking a proactive approach in seeking out opportunities to become increasingly involved in instructional leadership activities. This could be as simple as scheduling increased time to be in classrooms and becoming more involved in instructional conversations with teachers (Gurley et al., 2015). Doubtless, assistant principals who are reading this are asking where that additional time will come from. It is for this reason that it is vital for these individuals to speak with their current principal about their goals. Having conversations with principals, district leadership, regional service centers, and university faculty may benefit aspiring principals.

Limitations

Principal transition programs are not the only way to improve principal readiness. There are in fact many potential ways to improve the principal leadership pipeline. This study is limited both in its intent and its results to an examination of the impact of targeted interventions designed to improve participant perception of self-efficacy among aspiring school leaders. Other limitations of this study include its sample size and limited geographic range. Further research may well be

warranted across a wider geographic area and with a larger group of participants to further validate the usefulness of the interventions presented in this study.

Conclusion

Bexar PREP was created in response to a need identified by local area superintendent to better prepare individuals to step into the role of urban school principal. This research was conducted to measure the degree to which this program succeeded in improving levels of participant self-efficacy in regard to management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. The results of this study indicate that those individuals who participated in the Bexar County principal readiness education program demonstrated statistically significant gains in all three measured factors of principal self-efficacy. In particular, participation in the principal readiness program demonstrated a strong effect on instructional leadership self-efficacy. Clearly, there are challenges faced by individuals as they transition into the role of urban school principal. This study demonstrates that professional development created in collaboration between regional education centers, local school districts, and university faculty are one useful way to help prepare individuals to transition into the role of urban school principal.

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